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Travellers' stand-off 12-PAGE SPECIAL

Traveller activist wins 11th-hour reprieve

THIS is traveller activist Candy Sheridan who singlehandedly, and quite sensationally, stalled the Dale Farm eviction at the last minute yesterday.

SPECIAL REPORTS: P2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12

Picture: PAUL WATSON

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Y HOLDS OFF



■ Packing her hags - a young traveller appears ready to leave, Inset: Radio and TV presenter Gloris Humiford, who visited the site



■ The press - surrounding ballitts Picture: AL UNDERWOOD bissers to

Shock and joy at court reprieve

BASILDON council's mass eviction of Dale Farm was sensationally blocked after travellers won a very last minute stay of execution. After a tense eacht hour stand off, with builds failing to enter the site, the High Court served an invespected injunction against the clearance, alread of yet another court clash on Friday.

Eleted clusers swept through the illegal camp as news of the reprieve sank in, drawning out the hum of two helicopters circling the site.

The slock news came loss than an hour after electricity at the site was cut giving the impression the build work of the site of the site in the site of the site of the site in the site in the site of the site of the site in the site in the site of the site in the site in the site of the site in the site in the site of the solid in the site of the site of the self in the site of the site of the self in the site of the site of the self in the site of the site of the self in the site of the self in the site of the site of the self in the

By JON AUSTIN, GINA MARDEN and EMMA THOMAS

eviction be stopped. We hope now to get the backing of the human rights

eviction be stopped. We hope new to get the backing of the human rights court.

"We hope what we are doing here boday will help future generations of travellers."

Mr Puson showed the Zeho the chains he had been wearing around his wrist. He said he and others were prepared to chain themselves to scafolding at the site, to stop the eviction they had to.

The new case raised by the fraveller centres around claims male traveller Candy Shoridan.

She said the council is only legally contiled to remove caravans and haddom from the site, but not the 30-odd mobile homes or any fencing.

Mr Justice Edwards Situat granted the injunction at London's High Court, on the basis that there was a "realistic apprehension that the measures to be taken by flustides Council may go further than the terms of the enforcement notices."

He said "I do not see that any serions injustice will be caused if the actual implementation of any measures will not take place before the end of this week."

An earlier bid by traveller Mary Flynn, 72, to block her own eviction at the Court of Appeal was rejusted the same day leading many to believe it was the end of the legal has for the families, until the shock turnaround at about 145pm.

DALE FARM:

SEVIATO

Dale Farm hero persuades **High Court to** put back bailiffs' actions

By JON AUSTIN and STEPHEN HACKWELL

AN activist, without legal aid, has single-handedly managed to stall the eviction – and claims travellers will return in

force to Dale Farm today.

Traveller Candy Sheridan spent yesterday rushing between courts in Basildon, Chelmsford and London to secure a last-gasp

and London to secure a last-gasp injunction.

Her day culminated in a successful plea to the High Court to halt the bailiffs, because enforcement notices served by Basildon Council several years ago only apply to caravans, and not mobile homes.



■ Won ruling ~ Candy Sheridan

The orders served at Dale

The orders served at Dale Farm only specify caravans and hardstanding, not mobile homes, fences, brick walls or gates, according to the travellers.

This was revealed by the Echo last month. But council bosses said it was irrelevant and they would press on with the eviction, clearing all of the structures. If yesterday's eviction had gone ahead, council bosses could have acting illegally, the High Court ruled.

I'm over the moon. We've made history today. Finally we have found a court that will back us

that will back us

Ms Sheridan, the vice chairman of the Gypsy Council of North Norfolk, returned triumphantly to Dale Farm just before 8pm last night, to break the news to assembled travellers. Her bid to stall the eviction started at Basildon Crown Court at 8am and quickly moved to Chelmsford Crown Court, when she was told there was no judge available to hear her case.

After waiting for several hours at the courthouse, she was told to go to the High Court in London because Chelmsford could not deal with a decision of that magnitude.

She claimed the ruling gave the travellers legal basis to live on the campsite and meant the dozens of families who have left the site over the last week—thought to be between 30 and 40

- will return to the site today.
She said: "I'm over the moon.
We've made history today.
"The court ruling was a technicality, but that doesn't matter.
"Finally we have found a court that will back us.
"We have a legal basis to be here, so everyone who left is going to come back."
Former North Norfolk councillor Ms Sheridan also claimed the barricades at the entrance to the site would be removed because the travellers had the backing of the High Court.

Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart granted the last-minute injunction because he believed there was a fear bailiffs may go further than the actions permitted under enforcement notices.
The order stops the local authority clearing any physical structures, including caravans and cars, at least until a hearing on Friday.
It also stops the council cutting off utilities, such as electricity and water, before the hearing, unless they pose a danger.
Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart ruled the eviction could be justi-

fiably delayed because Basildon Council had not set a firm date for the clearance of Dale Farm.

The court case will centre around what the bailiffs can legally remove when they go on to Dale Farm.

In the meantime, Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart told activists to start dismantling the dangerous barricades and ordered them to take "reasonable steps" to allow the council on to the site.

The council must give travellers a timetable by noon today, detailing what actions bailiffs will take and when on a plot-by-plot basis.

Travellers must reply by noon on Thursday.

Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart said: "It is in nobody's interests that we have a riot on this site.

"There's got to be a bit of give and take over a limited time frame, to see if the problems can be dealt with in an orderly rather than disruptive way."

He added: "I appreciate it is a deeply unpleasant stuntion, but unfortunately this is a road which is reaching its and and there is sadly no mileage in prolonging the agony."



■ Stand-off – a protester on the scaffolding at Dale Farm

RYA

Ball: Council caught off guard

BASILDON council leader Tony Ball was visibly disappointed, but said he was still confident the High Court would allow the

the High Court would allow the eviction to go ahead.

Speaking at a press conference late yesterday afternoon, as the planned eviction was poised to get under way, Mr Ball said the council had been caught completely off guard.

He said: "Clearly, the council and I are extremely disappointed and frustrated by the decision of the High Court today.

"The motion was put forward to the High Court without notice, which meant the judge only had one side of the story, and therefore he has given the

By EMMA THOMAS

council until Friday to go back to the High Court to make its argument.

ment.

"I'm absolutely clear, that on this issue on Friday, the court will find in the council's favour and the site clearance will be able to continue.

"Until then, the council will comply with the law and the judgment that has been put before us."

Mr Rall was flanked by John

before us."

Mr Ball was flanked by John
Baron, Conservative MP for
Basildon and Billericay.
He stood solemnly by, as the
council leader addressed the

media, which had assembled shortly after the High Court decision was announced at about

decision was annotated 4.45pm.

It now looks unlikely any more action will be taken by bailiffs before the council goes to court on Friday.

Rumours the eviction had stalled began to circulate among travellers and protesters about

travellers and protesters about an hour before the news of the High Court decision filtered

Vanloads of police, who had arrived at Dale Farm to oversee the eviction, then left the site at about 4pm and returned to their temporary base at the nearby Barleylands Farm.



Covered up - a protester inside the camp

BA49740 097

Just 14 children turn up at school

JUST 14 children turned up to lessons at Crays Hill Primary School yesterday.

This was less than half of the usual 30 or 40 youngsters who normally show up on daily basis.

Despite the low attendance, Essex County Council confirmed the school will remain open throughout the eviction.

A spokesman said: "It's business as usual and will remain so while the eviction is

The school is now attended mostly by the travellers' children living on the unauthorised Dale Farm site, in Oak Lane, Crays Hill.

Oak hane, Clays III. Attendance has dropped to as low as between five and 12 pupils turning upon some occasions in recent years.



■ Getting ready - protesters in forensic suits and masks preparing the site at Dale Farm

Pictures: LUAN MARSHALL BA49740_216

DALE FARM: STA

COURT DECISION

Dale Farm neighbour thought it was all over as eviction day arrived...but his agony goes on

NEIGHBOUR living by the Dale Farm site says he plans to take court action Basildon Council for maladministration because of the latest delays in the eviction.

the eviction.

Choking back his shock at the last minute turnaround, Len Gridley, 52, whose Oak Road garden backs on to the site, and who has been its most vocal opponent. questioned whether the eviction would ever happen. He said: "This is yet another cock-up by the council over Dale Farm.
"They have let this go on for ten years, and I can honestly say I don't think I will ever see the trav-

By JON AUSTIN

ellers moved on. If the council has issued defective enforcement notices, and then not done any-thing about it, then I will have an even better case for maladminis-

even better case for management tration.
"I will sue for the loss of value in my property. I have a home I now can't sell. Where are my human rights?
"I have no human rights because I am a taxpaying UK citi-

"I have no human rights because I am a taxpaying UK citizen.

"If this goes the travellers' way then I might as well board up my house and become a gipsy, because they get better treated."

Mr Gridley's garden was invaded by media from 6am yesterday.

Three TV crews placed rising hydraulic platforms at the bottom of his garden to gave a birds-eye view of the eviction to the media.

By yesterday morning he found pipes to the hydraulics of two of the platforms had been cut, meaning they would not rise above the tarpaulin screen put up against his fence by the protesters.

Mr Gridley said: "This is the sort of thing I have to put up with. It will be reported as criminal damage."

Throughout the day members of





■ Stark message – a wheelchair user makes their point in no uncertain terms

5-072(6)



■ Lookout – a protester scales the scaffolding while awaiting the bailiffs



■ Plea – an appeal to the bailiffs is painted on this caravan

Bailiffs heckled as they ask protesters to leave

By GINA MARDEN

BAILIFFS were heckled by travellers and protesters as they made their one and only visit on to the site yes-

and protesters as they made their one and only visit on to the site yesterday.

A group of bailiffs, backed up by about 15 police officers, went on to the site at about 3pm yesterday.

They walked in a line through the metal fencing separating the bailiffs' compound and the traveller site.

As they did there was a press scrum as media filmed and photographed them as they made their way to the barricade. They were met with loud cries and jeers from travellers and protesters. Speaking through a loudhailer, bailiff Bryan Lecoche told the travellers they had concerns for their safety as well as fears over the dangerous structure blocking the access to the site.

He told of the bailiffs' concerns, especially in regard to a scaffold barricade built by the campaigners which he said had the potential to "put people's lives in danger".

A woman then yelled out "a woman



■ Extreme action – a protester, known only as Emma, was attached to the front gates by a bike lock around her neck

will die if you move it". This was in reference to the protester who had put a bike lock around her neck and attached it to the barricade over the site's main entrance.

The spokesman then went on to speak of health and safety concerns before asking if there was anything he

could do to get people to leave peacefully. This was met with jeers.
One woman, clutching her son,
screamed at the bailiffs: "You're a disgrace, haven't you got a better job to do?
"This is my baby and you're going to
make him homeless."

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WEATHER

TODAY Largely dry with a fair amount of cloud, but also a few sunny

TEMP: 14 to 18c AIR QUALITY: Good



TOMORROW

Breezy and mostly cloudy with rain clearing to leave scattered

TEMP: 13 to 17c AIR QUALITY: Good



HIGH TIDES: Today 2.44pm - 6.1m. Tomor 2.40am - 6.0m. 3.15pm - 5.9m. SUNSET: 5.19pm SUNRISE: 6.59am

ON THIS DAY

people.

1999: A UN force arrived in East Timor in an attempt to restore law and order to the territory

DALE FARM:

Loud music and barbeque as protest camp awaited eviction that never came

By JON AUSTIN

THERE was a carnival spirit at the

THERE was a carnival spirit at the Dale Farm traveller camp as loud music blared across the site.
Yesterday's scenes at the now world famous site went from the surreal to sublime and then sinister.
First, rows of activists in clinical masks and blue forensic boiler suits made their way about the site.
The odd vision was watered down when camp DJs blared reggae and dance tracks with a roaring bassline as the weather heated up.
A makeshift party followed as protesters eagerly called for more tracks.
The summer tunes were added to by the smell of burning charcoal as some of them whipped up a vegan barbecue.

some of them whipped up a vegan barbecue.

But while hungry supporters queued for their food, others were busy reinforcing the site and bringing out an array of obstacles.

A bin full of large rocks was spotted, while there were a number of rows of tyres wrapped in barbed wire on scaffold frames.

Some of the boiler-suited people also brought out what looked like spray pumps used for creosoting garden fences.

Other items stockpiled included hay, and rolls and rolls of what looked like carpet, which was stored in an old barn.

Party time on eve of 'eviction'

WOMEN on Dale Farm threw what WOMEN on Dale Farm threw what they believed would be their final Party on Sunday night while others watched television, making the most of electricity before it might be cut off. Many of the women drank until midnight, listening to music and singing traditional songs.

One said: "If this is our last night in our homes, we're going to enjoy it.' Others said they were skipping the party as they planned to carry on as normal - including a few sending their children to school in the morning, beyond the barricades.



■ Warning - a Dale Farm resident with her child in front of the front gate, and a chilling warning to bailiffs





■ Ready for the fight – a group of protesters get comfortable while they wait for the bailiffs to start the eviction

By JON AUSTIN jon.austin@nqe.com

BY 7am yesterday morning, Dale Farm was beginning to

stir.
Protesters, some with high visibility "legal monitor" jackets appeared in small numbers, before walking about the site.
One man, in his twenties, wore a blue forensic-style boiler suit and mask. Everyone converged on the Camp Constant area for what looked like a morning briefing.

People were talking on walkie-talkies and it appeared highly

Protesters build barricades and prepare for confrontatio

organised. Within an hour, the site was a hive of activity, with as many as 50 protesters starting to make their way to the front barricade.

A battered and oil-covered car, which was parked with its front facing a wall halfway up Oak

Lane on the illegal site, was moved by a group of the "foren-sic team" which now numbered about 20. Piles of mattresses lay

about 20. Piles of mattresses lay next to it.

These were taken to the barricade, where there was already a large white van blocking the entrance. A row of tyres wrapped in barbed wire on a scaffolding frame added to the makeshift defences.

By 8.30am, people were starting to climb into a treehouse-type structure on top of the main scaffold barrier, including more people in the boiler suits.

There was not a traveller in sight, but the place was crawling with activists aged from their twenties to their seventies, or even older.

By 9am the unmistakable

even older.

By 9am the unmistakable shout of an Irish traveller woman's voice could be heard.

A woman appeared at one of the doorways and chatted to a protester. An elderly male traveller was also walking about the camp camp.

Signs were spray-painted on some of the demountable build-ings, including "owner in hospi-

tal. Will move in two to three days" with a mobile number, which the Echo tried to phone,

but it did not answer.

All the milling about felt like the calm before a storm as a helicopter constantly hovered overhead, with its hum only broken by occasional dog barks and shouts

head, with its hum only broken by occasional dog barks and shouts.

At 10.30am gas canisters were seen being moved towards the front barricade.

There have been previous threats the canisters would be lit and used as weapons against the bailiffs. That was after the first threat of eviction in 2005.

Yesterday morning, there were few actual touring caravans left on the site, as many had moved to the neighbouring legal site or vacated the area completely.

Of the 30-odd mobile homes on the site, quite a few were still occupied.

People, including children, could be seen through net curtains.

At Llam the protesters were

tains.
At 11am the protesters were hurriedly returning to their camp, dubbed Camp Constant, laden with food, drinks and toilet

rolls, seemingly set for a lengthy

sit-in.
Plastic chairs were also being

Plastic chairs were also being taken to the front barrier. Two helicopters were overhead.
The helicopters stayed overhead most of the day.
By noon, activists were busy bringing makeshift obstacles down to the front barrier where many remained for much of the day.

many remained for much of the day.

Tension could be felt in the air as they expectantly waited for the first knock from the bailiffs.

When it came, the voice through a loudspeaker, urging the barrier to be removed, was drowned out the shouts and jeering, before bailiffs retreated and the preparations continued.

One elderly traveller woman told waiting media: "They have no heart to do this, but our blood is thicker than theirs and we will win."

win."

A man added; "This is crazy, £18million to remove people from their homes."

The pair were later branding it "a miracle" when court ruling came in, at 4.30pm, delaying-the eviction until Friday.



■ Take pity – a traveller appeals to the bailiffs to leave them alone

DALE FARM:

BEFORE EVICTION

Teenager, 18, chains herself to the gates by her neck to stop eviction

A PROTESTER was chained to the gates of Dale Farm by her neck and others manned

her neck and others manned barricades to lock down the site before bailiffs moved in.

Council workers and bailiffs from Constant and Co were greeted with a chilling message posted on the gates: "Danger of Death: Behind this gate a woman is attached by her neck. If you attempt to open this gate you will kill her"

Moveable barricades reinforced with tyres were set up on forced with tyres were set up on

forced with tyres were set up on roads within the site and barrels filled with concrete were placed providing protesters points to tie themselves to.

Two supporters of the trav-

Two supporters of the travellers, giving their names as Dean, 29, and Emma, 18, even handcuffed themselves to a pole concreted inside a barrel behind the gate to the site.

Emma was also attached to the gates by a bike lock placed around her neck, knowing she could die if the gates were opened.

around her neck, knowing she could die if the gates were opened.

Speaking before the eviction, Dean said: "Ihave studied what's going on here long and hard and believe when the law is used for wrong, civil disobedience is the only way to oppose it.

"The idea is the bailiffs cannot open this gate without killing us both. We'll sleep here for weeks if we have to."

Paintings of children and a banner calling for "Human rights for Dale Farm" were put up outside the main barricades.

Teenager Shannon Egan spoke from the scaffold barricade where she, other travellers and activists gathered. She said her mother relied on life-saving medication, which had to be delivered to her at Dale Farm.

Defiantly, she said: "I will fight to the end, and when I have to go, I will go with a smile."

One protester, called Ruth, who chained herself to a car, said: "There are people here from all over the world and the travellers have made us so wel-

This eviction shows a lack of imagination and and compassion. The greatest injustice is there isn't an answer



■ Risking her life – a female protester, known as Emma, chained herself to the gates to stop the eviction

come. It has become increasingly difficult for travellers to find a site in recent years. Planning law is very discretionary and we do not feel it's being used fairly."

Supporters delivered a large amount of supplies, including crisps, bread, tinned fruit, biscuits, peanuts, dried apricots, orange juice and toilet paper, to the site through the main gate

the site through the main gate this morning. Religious leaders also arrived at the site as protesters dug in to show their support for the trav-

Father Paul Trathen, of the Basildon Faith Forum, said religious leaders were against the eviction and had offered to mediate between travellers and Basildon Council.

As bailiffs prepared to move in, Father Trathen, also an adviser for the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford, said the eviction of illegal plots at Dale Farm will only move the problem elsewhere.

He said: "This eviction shows

He said: "This eviction shows a lack of imagination and com-

passion.

"The greatest injustice is that there isn't an answer to the serious question of what happens

"They aren't solving the prob-lem they are just moving it down the road."



■ Fear – a group of young women wait on scaffold

Caravans appear in Cambridgeshire

SEVEN caravans from Dale Farm pitched up at a site in Cambridgeshire, it is believed. Residents living next to the Smithy Fen site, in Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, saw the vehi-cles arrive late on Saturday. It was just a few hours after a similar number of vans left

the illegal site at Dale Farm.
Both sites are owned by
members of the Sheridan family of travellers.
In March, traveller activist
Candy Sheridan said six families from Dale Farm owned
legitimate plots at Smithy Fen
which were empty, but they

did not want to live there and they were only back-ups should they have to leave Dale Farm.

She later backtracked and said most of the travellers with land at Smithy Fen were from the legal site next to Dale Farm.

COMMENT

So much for the big fat eviction

In the end, the D in D-Day turned out to stand for D-map squib.

There was no invasion of bailiffs, no forced eviction. Families at the Dale Farm travellers' site will be able to sleep another few nights, at least, in Crays Hill.

The long-awaited endgame to

sleep another few nights, at least, in Crays Hill.

The long-awaited endgame to the Dale Farm saga has failed to materialise. Instead, the process was delayed by yet another legal manoeuvre, another of the seemingly endless list of legal quibbles referred to the courts.

To Basildon Council and the other residents of Crays Hill, it all looks wearily familiar. Once again, they will be wondering, is this going to go on forever? Yet frustrating though it is, the present delay does nothing to undermine the basic strength of the council's case for eviction, established so painstakingly over so many years.

The current delay resides in a technicality connected to the eviction notices. The wording of the judge's decision, at least as reported to date, appears somewhat woolly. There is nothing woolly, though, about the injunction that the court has issued, stopping the council's bailiffs in their tracks. Nowhere is it apparent that the court grasps the consequences of its decision.

Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart's statement care.

Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart's oblivious to the vast sums of public money eaten up every extra day that the bailiffs remain at Dale Farm.

In retrospect, it is a pity that the bailiffs did not strike hard and fast at the stroke of 8am, pre-empting the latest court

Yet Basildon Council is wise Yet Basildon Council is wise to ensure that every conceivable legal consideration has been dealt with. Otherwise, they could be faced with the humiliation of a major bill for damages. While they hold fire yet again, they can take comfort from the fact that even the original D-Day was delayed, but it happened in the end, and the right side won. right side won.



■ The children of Dale Farm – travellers put on a display in front of their entrance gates

By BEN KENDALL

AT the end of a rutted track stands a ramshackle scaffold rampart – the entrance to the Dale Farm travellers site.

On one side of a barbed wire-topped wall lie about 50 legal homes, on the other the contest-ed 51 plots.

Most residents live in semi-per-manent caravans and mobile

The population fluctuates as residents, who own the land, spend six months a year on the road, travelling for seasonal work. But the illegal side is thought to house roughly 400 travellers.

thought to house roughly 400 travellers.

To the travellers this is their home. Children have been born and schooled in the area for ten years, their grandparents have grown old on this former scrap-

grown old on the sold yard.

To opponents – including many of Dale Farm's neighbours in Crays Hill – it is a blight on the landscape, detrimental to house prices and a flagrant abuse of planning laws.

Jane Flynn was among the eargust of the sold prices and a flagrant base.

Jane Flynn was among the ear-liest settlers on the site and has

If I was born a Muslim, people would respect my way of life, but because I'm a traveller they think it is OK to discriminate

It might not be much, but we

four children She said: "We have put in for planning permission several times but it has been refused again and again.

"I pay council tax and my children go to school here – they are Basildon born and bred.
"People don't understand the traveller way of life. If I was born a Muslim, people would respect my way of life, but because I'm a traveller they think it is OK to discriminate.

"We want to stay together as a community. Offering us houses doesn't solve the problem.

"There is no suitable site available to us, so where are we supposed to go?"

Her friend, mother-of-two Mary O'Brien, added: "This has been my home for ten years.
"I just wish people who criticise us would come down here

and see how we live. We don't want trouble with anyone."

Margaret Culligan has a sixmonth-old son who suffers from Down's syndrome. She fears the eviction will disrupt his medical treatment.

She added: "I don't know where we're going to go. I'm terrified the electricity and water will be cut off in the night and I won't be able to care for my son."

The Dale Farm community is mostly made up of Irish travellers, although there are some from gipsy and other nomadic communities.

Both I rish travellers and Romany gipsies are recognised ethnic groups. Most describe themselves as devoutly Catholic.

Kathleen McCarthy has been one of the more vocal travellers, attending the failed bid for a

High Court injunction to stop the eviction of 72-year-old Mary Flynn, who suffers breathing problems and uses a nebuliser.

Mrs Flynn is one of several older residents who suffer health problems and there are fears their care will be throwninto disarray by the eviction.

Mrs McCarthy has promised that any resistance will be peaceful and denies suggestions that supporters who have arrived to frustrate bailiffs are simply there for the fight.

rustrate ballits are simply there for the fight.

"We won't simply be forced from our homes, but anybody who is welcomed on this site will resist in a peaceful way," she added.

"We will resist the halliffs and

"We will resist the balliffs and build barricades, but none of us have weapons or anything like that."

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D-Day for D-

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the Hill,

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to go

By BEN KENDALL am the and of a mitted track

